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The American Occupation of the Philippines, 1898-1912 by James H. Blount

Review by: Payson J. Treat

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## NOTES AND REVIEWS

*The American Occupation of the Philippines, 1898-1912.* By JAMES H. BLOUNT, Officer of United States Volunteers in the Philippines, 1899-1901, United States District Judge in the Philippines, 1901-1905. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Fifteen years have passed since the guns of Commodore Dewey announced the birth of our Philippine problem. These years have been full of incident and the historian has been called upon to record events vastly different from those of our earlier history. Our army was suddenly compelled to conduct a campaign seven thousand miles from its base. Our naval and military officers were drafted in as diplomats during the months of uncertainty and indecision which only ended in a bitterly fought insurrection. Then when the organized forces were scattered, came months of less glorious and more nerve-racking guerrilla warfare. And, finally, untrained civilians were sent out to meet and solve vexed problems of tropical administration. For six years a peace unknown in their history has reigned in the islands, and along all lines marked progress has been made.

The time was ripe for a careful study of the work of the Americans in the Philippine Islands. The American people have known little and apparently cared less about what has occurred there. During the insurrection considerable material, generally of a critical nature, was published in this country, and in the political campaign of 1900 an attempt was made to interest our voters in the general question, but with no apparent success. So the announcement of a work entitled *The American Occupation of the Philippines, 1898-1912*, was bound to be hailed with interest by students of our work in those islands. The author, moreover, Mr. James H. Blount, had served there as a lieutenant in the volunteers and later for three and a half years as a judge of the Court of First Instance (not as a United States district judge, as the title page indicates), so, apparently, he was well qualified for his appointed task.

Mr. Blount's work, however, is not a history of the American occupation. It is instead a clever piece of special pleading designed to support the author's contention that the Philippine

peoples are prepared for and entitled to independence and that "what is needed is a formal legislative announcement that the governing of a remote and alien people is to have no permanent place in the purposes of our national life." If it is borne in mind that the volume is largely concerned with opinion and with material to support the thesis and that it does not offer a comprehensive view of the events of the past fourteen years, then the reader will doubtless derive no little suggestion and information from its pages. It is to be regretted, however, that a volume with so comprehensive a title, will probably be accepted at its face value.

An analysis of the work will indicate more clearly the reason for this criticism. Of the 655 pages, 185 deal with the conditions during and after the Spanish War; 158 describe campaigns during the insurrection, principally those in which the author participated; 225 describe certain events since the establishment of civil government in 1901; and 84 are concerned with general considerations, including a bitter attack upon the late secretary of the interior, the Honorable Dean C. Worcester. In the discussion of the events of the past eleven years 50 pages are devoted to the brigand rising in Samar, and yet not a page throughout the entire volume is given to any account of those constructive works which have won for our administration in the Philippine Islands the admiration of all trained observers. After almost 500 pages of indiscriminate criticism we come upon this first reference: "We can point with pride to many things we have done in the Philippines, the public improvements, the school system, the better sanitation, and a long list of other benefits conferred" (p. 495). Surely an account of the American occupation of the Philippines, 1898-1912, might well be expected to contain, within some 650 pages, more than three or four scattered *sentences* in description of the schools, the hospitals, the model prisons, the roads and bridges, the vigilant quarantine, the struggle against preventable diseases, the work of scientists to protect human and animal life and to increase the production of the soil, the pacification of the wild tribes, and the other activities of trained Americans inspired with an unusual sense of devotion to their work and of belief in their ability to help a less favored people.

If the subject matter fails to fulfill the promise of the title it also falls short of the authority implied by the frequent footnotes and citation to sources. A frequent offense is the use of italics, in quotations, which at times may alter the sense of the original

content. A more serious criticism arises from the following incident. On page 292 the statement that "the war demonstrated to the army, to a Q.E.D., that the Filipinos are 'capable of self-government,'" is supported by the following note: "Says General Chaffee in his annual report for 1902: 'The intelligent element controlled the ignorant masses as perfectly as ever a captain controlled the men of his company.'" But what General Chaffee really said was: "The intelligent men of the section controlled the ignorant masses, etc.," and in the same paragraph the nature of this "coercion of the uneducated and ignorant" is described. In other words, a statement describing conditions *in the section* (Batangas) is used to support a general contention. It is this control of the ignorant by the educated and the wealthy which, in the opinion of most observers, for the present, renders self-government in the sense of democratic government out of the question.

In order to prove the great destruction of life during the insurrection Mr. Blount twice makes the following statement, emphasizing the "awful fact that according to the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey Atlas of the Philippines of 1899, the population of Batangas Province was 312,192, and according to the American census of the Philippines of 1903 it was 257,715" (pp. 384; 597). Again we learn, from the report of the provincial secretary of Batangas, that "the mortality, caused no longer by the war, but by disease, such as malaria and dysentery, has reduced to a little over 200,000 the more than 300,000 inhabitants which in former years the province had." From these statements the following conclusion is drawn: "While we will never know whether Batangas did or did not lose one hundred thousand as a result of the war and its consequences, still, if it did, the other forty-nine provinces above mentioned must have lost as many more, that is to say, must have lost another hundred thousand. So that while it is all a matter of surmise, with nothing more certain to go on than the foregoing, it would really seem by no means absurd to assume the Filipino loss of life, other than on the battlefield, caused by the war, and the famine, pestilence, and other disease consequent thereon, at not far from 200,000 people."

Fortunately for the reputation of Mr. Blount's fellow countrymen there was something "more certain to go on" than the figures he cites. The figures used in the Atlas of 1899 were not compiled by the accurate and painstaking Coast and Geodetic Survey, they were taken from the hasty compilation of the Schurman Commission of 1899. The census of 1903 prints a comparison of its

figures with those of the Spanish censuses of 1887 and 1876, and from this we find Batangas, and certain other provinces, had shown a steady decrease in population: viz: Batangas, 1876, 331,874; 1887, 311,180; 1903, 257,715 (Census Philippine Islands, II, 20). In other words thirteen provinces showed a decrease between 1876 and 1887, and seven of them showed a further decrease in the next period. Batangas, therefore, instead of losing 100,000 people in two years, had merely continued her previous decline, with no appalling death rate due to the Insurrection. But Mr. Blount further tells us: "a comparison of the Atlas population tables above mentioned with the census tables of 1903 shows no very startling difference in the population of any of the other provinces of the archipelago before and after the war except Batangas" (p. 598). A comparison, however, does show such discrepancies as these: Samar, Atlas, 200,753; Census, 265,549; Pangasinan (the scene of severe fighting), Atlas, 304,000; Census, 394,516; Cebu, Atlas, 504,076; Census, 653,727. With but few exceptions every province shows a marked "difference," and in almost every one a favorable one. In other words, the evidence in support of the "awful fact" in Batangas might have been used, if other provinces had been cited, to prove the beneficence of American rule.

Mr. Blount's treatment of many of his former colleagues in the islands is quite indefensible. The most violent of his attacks is directed against Mr. Dean C. Worcester in a chapter entitled "Non-Christian Worcester." We are told that Mr. Worcester is "the direst calamity that has befallen the Filipinos since the American occupation, neither war, pestilence, famine, reconcentration, nor tariff-wrought poverty excepted," he is described as "an overbearing bully of the beggar-on-horseback type," and he is said to be "very generally and very cordially detested by the Filipinos." Then follows a severe arraignment of Mr. Worcester's efforts in studying and caring for the non-Christian tribes under his jurisdiction.

The subject of this attack is the man who doubtless knows more about the Philippine Islands and their peoples than any other living authority; the only American who had traveled at all extensively in the islands during the Spanish régime; and the only one to hold a portfolio in the commission from its inauguration in 1900 to the present time. When one understands the services of Dean C. Worcester as secretary of the interior, charged with the supervision of such vital bureaus as health, quarantine service, forestry, science, weather, and lands, as well as of the non-Christ-

ian tribes; when one realizes that much of the most creditable work of the American occupation is due to his knowledge of conditions and his trained judgment; then the reviewer feels sure that the tribute which Mr. Blount ascribes to President Taft, that Dean C. Worcester is "the most valuable man we have on the Philippine Commission" will be accepted as a more accurate appraisal than Mr. Blount's remarkable chapter.

With these statements concerning the matter and the manner of Mr. Blount's work, the reviewer would leave the opinions advanced by the author without comment. He agrees with Mr. Blount that a congressional statement regarding our ultimate aims in the islands should be made. He looks forward to an independent or a self-governing state there, but Mr. Blount's arguments have not convinced him of the preparedness of the Filipino peoples for self-government now or within eight years.

PAYSON J. TREAT.

*Facts of Reconstruction.* By MAJOR JOHN R. LYNCH. New York: The Neale Publishing Co. 1913.

*Facts of Reconstruction*, a book written by Major John R. Lynch, has just been issued from the press of the Neale Publishing Company of New York. Major Lynch is peculiarly well fitted to write authoritatively of Southern reconstruction. During this pivotal period he served three terms in Congress from Mississippi, a state in which the colored citizen attained his highest political eminence. Subsequently he was fourth auditor of the treasury at Washington, and is now a retired major of the regular United States Army, and for forty years has been recognized and accepted as Southern political leader of national fame and reputation.

This book is perhaps the best contribution which has been made by any writer during recent years to the political literature of the reconstruction era. Only in two states of the South does the colored population exceed that of the white—South Carolina and Mississippi. As the colored citizen acquired the greatest political distinction in Mississippi, the actual facts of the colored citizen's part in government in this state during reconstruction times, ought to give the key to the understanding of the whole Southern political situation. The book has a vital bearing upon the most urgent and pressing political problems of the South and the nation. Its chief merits lie in its intimate familiarity with the general and inside history of the country, and especially Mississippi and the